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**SECRET INTELLIGENCE AND COVERT ACTION:
CONSENSUS IN AN OPEN SOCIETY (U)**

BY

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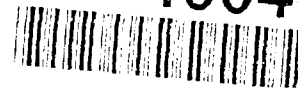
USAWC CLASS OF 1993



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93-10040



REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE				Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188	
1a. REPORT SECURITY CLASSIFICATION UNCLASSIFIED			1b. RESTRICTIVE MARKINGS		
2a. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION AUTHORITY			3. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY OF REPORT DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT A: Approved for public release. Distribution is unlimited.		
2b. DECLASSIFICATION/DOWNGRADING SCHEDULE					
4. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER(S)			5. MONITORING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER(S)		
6a. NAME OF PERFORMING ORGANIZATION U.S. ARMY WAR COLLEGE		6b. OFFICE SYMBOL (If applicable)	7a. NAME OF MONITORING ORGANIZATION		
6c. ADDRESS (City, State, and ZIP Code) ROOT HALL, BUILDING 122 CARLISLE, PA 17013-5050			7b. ADDRESS (City, State, and ZIP Code)		
8a. NAME OF FUNDING/SPONSORING ORGANIZATION		8b. OFFICE SYMBOL (If applicable)	9. PROCUREMENT INSTRUMENT IDENTIFICATION NUMBER		
8c. ADDRESS (City, State, and ZIP Code)			10. SOURCE OF FUNDING NUMBERS		
			PROGRAM ELEMENT NO.	PROJECT NO.	TASK NO.
11. TITLE (Include Security Classification) SECRET INTELLIGENCE AND COVERT ACTION: CONSENSUS IN AN OPEN SOCIETY UNCLASSIFIED					
12. PERSONAL AUTHOR(S) LIEUTENANT COLONEL JOHN C. GREEN					
13a. TYPE OF REPORT STUDY PROJECT		13b. TIME COVERED FROM _____ TO _____		14. DATE OF REPORT (Year, Month, Day) 930319	
15. PAGE COUNT 61					
16. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTATION					
17. COSATI CODES			18. SUBJECT TERMS (Continue on reverse if necessary and identify by block number)		
FIELD	GROUP	SUB-GROUP			
19. ABSTRACT (Continue on reverse if necessary and identify by block number) See reverse.					
20. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY OF ABSTRACT <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNCLASSIFIED/UNLIMITED <input type="checkbox"/> SAME AS RPT. <input type="checkbox"/> DTIC USERS					
21. ABSTRACT SECURITY CLASSIFICATION UNCLASSIFIED					
22a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE INDIVIDUAL DOUGLAS H. DEARTH			22b. TELEPHONE (Include Area Code) 717-245-3191		22c. OFFICE SYMBOL RWCA6

USAWC MILITARY STUDIES PROGRAM PAPER

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SECRET INTELLIGENCE AND COVERT ACTION: CONSENSUS IN AN OPEN SOCIETY

AN INDIVIDUAL STUDY PROJECT

by

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Unannounced	<input type="checkbox"/>
Justification	
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Availability Codes	
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ABSTRACT

AUTHOR: John C. Green, LTC, USA

TITLE: Secret Intelligence and Covert Action:
Consensus in an Open Society

FORMAT: Individual Study Project

DATE: 19 March 1993 **PAGES:** 53 **CLASSIFICATION:** Unclassified

Consensus on clandestine human intelligence (HUMINT) and covert action has fluctuated since the 1970s, when controversial government activities were exposed to the public. A critical debate ensued over the principal issues of propriety, accountability, and secrecy. Assertive congressional oversight developed, and sharp political confrontation replaced bipartisan consensus. HUMINT and covert action declined during the 1970s. Covert action increased in the early 1980s, but HUMINT lagged behind. Post-Cold War defense budget reductions have changed the intelligence debate to emphasize reform for cost-effectiveness. Although HUMINT and covert action are relatively inexpensive, their questioned effectiveness has resulted in scrutiny. Most authorities see covert action as a capability to be kept in readiness for rare occasions when its use is clearly appropriate. Because of low cost and increased requirements, most reformers urge revitalization of HUMINT. Uncertainty about the future limits potential consensus, but pressure for less secrecy and emerging nontraditional intelligence requirements are factors weighing on the Intelligence Community's new managers and overseers. If consensus emerges from the debate, HUMINT and covert action can be valuable resources in securing U.S. interests.

INTRODUCTION

Societies and their governments have always sought to use secret intelligence about other societies for advantage in competition, conflict and war. The ways in which different societies employ and control their secret intelligence services vary with the nature of those societies.

In America's pluralistic society, with its representative democracy, unanimity is a virtual impossibility on most issues. Our democracy has functioned, for the most part, on the next-best form of consent and agreement: consensus. In the absence of consensus, there is controversy.

The Intelligence Community has experienced consensus and much controversy in the years since the media and Congress first exposed intelligence agencies' previously-secret and highly controversial activities of the 1960s and early 1970s.

Some Americans' political and moral sensibilities were deeply offended by the revelations of the Senate and House committee hearings. Former Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense and American Civil Liberties Union official Morton Halperin compared the use of secret intelligence to defend a constitutional republic as equivalent to employing leeches to take blood from feverish patients; the cure is more deadly than the disease.¹

Mr. Halperin's 1976 opinion is one of many in the ongoing debate over secret intelligence in the United States. What sustains this debate? Why does consensus on intelligence matter?

This study addresses those questions. American social and political consensus on the role of government and its proper

foreign and domestic policies has coalesced, changed, re-emerged, and begun to change again between 1976 and 1993; with each change, the Intelligence Community's dominant characteristics have been debated and altered, particularly in the conduct of covert action and clandestine human intelligence (HUMINT) collection.

The reasons for fluctuating consensus are diverse. Some of the attitudes formed during the events of the early 1970s persist in varying forms and intensity. Subsequent events caused competing attitudes and perceptions to emerge, especially in the aftermath of failed detente in the late 1970s. More recently, commonly-held perceptions of a significant external security threat to the United States have disintegrated with the Berlin Wall, communism and the former Soviet Union. Emerging anxieties about a fundamentally changed world compete with domestic concerns for attention and dollars, leading to calls for reorganization and refocus of the Intelligence Community to meet new requirements for collection and analysis, among them regional instabilities caused by ethnic and nationalist antagonisms, economic competition and environmental issues.²

In some respects, the public debate of the 1970s over the government's intelligence organizations and activities has resurfaced, but with additional dimensions. Slightly less concerned now with the notion that "democracy and secrecy are incompatible", today's debate encompasses the old issues of propriety

and accountability, and adds effectiveness and cost versus benefit to the mix.

Some arguments combine positions on these four interrelated issues to form a fifth, overarching issue: whether the U.S. needs a secret intelligence service at all. The future of covert action figures most prominently here. There are prominent critics such as U.S. Congressman Ron Dellums of California, newly-appointed House Armed Services Committee Chairman and former member of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, who declared in 1980, "We should totally dismantle every intelligence agency in this country piece by piece, nail by nail, brick by brick."⁴ However, most experts see a continuing need for intelligence in an uncertain and still-dangerous world. Thus, the viable issues mostly constitute an unresolved debate over how much and what kinds of intelligence are enough to meet the nation's current and future security needs, and at what cost.

This study examines these issues in terms of the major concerns and positions articulated by various authorities in the Intelligence Community, executive and legislative branches of government, and the academic community. The author then summarizes the major events and historical developments through which the Intelligence Community, Congress, and the Carter, Reagan and Bush administrations interacted on the issues. In this study's final section, the author analyzes the outlook for future consensus on the roles of HUMINT and covert operations. Whatever that

consensus, intelligence is not likely to be the same for practitioners or consumers as before the end of the Cold War.

SCOPE OF STUDY AND DEFINITION OF TERMS

Although most published studies on intelligence consider its four categories of collection, counterintelligence, analysis and covert action,⁵ the author has chosen to address only covert action and collection, specifically clandestine human collection.

Simple but all-inclusive definitions of these two activities are elusive, especially for covert action. In elementary terms, covert action is the pursuit of American foreign policy objectives through secret intervention into the affairs of other nations.⁶ The government uses more involved definitions in various official sources. Title VI of the Intelligence Authorization Act, Fiscal Year 1991, defines covert action as:

an activity or activities of the United States Government to influence political, economic, or military conditions abroad, where it is intended that the role of the United States Government will not be apparent or acknowledged publicly, but does not include-

(1) activities the primary purpose of which is to acquire intelligence, traditional counterintelligence activities, traditional activities to improve or maintain the operational security of United States Government programs, or administrative activities;

(2) traditional diplomatic or military activities or routine support to such activities;

(3) traditional law enforcement activities conducted by United States Government law enforcement agencies or routine support to such activities; or

(4) activities to provide routine support to the overt activities (other than activities described in paragraph (1), (2), or (3) of other United States Government agencies abroad.⁷

It is necessary to distinguish between the terms "covert" and "clandestine" in U.S. military usage, although the two

terms are sometimes used interchangeably in intelligence literature. Joint Test Pub 3-05 defines "covert operations" as planned and executed so as to conceal the identity of or permit plausible denial by the sponsor. They differ from clandestine operations in that emphasis is placed on concealment of the identity of the sponsor, rather than on concealment of the operation.⁸

Covert action consists of several broad types of activity: propaganda or psychological warfare, paramilitary action, intelligence support, political action, economic action and involvement in coups d'etat.⁹

Clandestine human intelligence (HUMINT) collection is the procurement of intelligence information by persons using espionage techniques. These techniques are intended to assure secrecy or concealment of the collection activity, precluding target or enemy awareness that the collected information has been compromised. Clandestine HUMINT is usually accomplished through the recruitment of agents, or sources, by intelligence personnel functioning as case officers.¹⁰

Although the bulk of HUMINT reporting today is based on overt, non-clandestine collection such as that performed by diplomats and military attaches during the conduct of their normal duties,¹¹ clandestine HUMINT has figured more prominently, along with covert action, at the center of the controversy over propriety and ethics. To illustrate, Harvard University Professor Ernest R. May objected to Senator Boren's and Congressman McCurdy's reform legislation in the 102d Congress, in particular

concerning the removal of the analysis function from the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). May said the removal would cause the agency to evolve into what is now its dubious image of an organization for spies and "dirty tricks".¹²

May's reference to clandestine collection and covert action as the CIA's "dubious image" illustrates the unfortunate popular linkage between the two activities. Although understandable from the fact that intelligence agencies, specifically the CIA, perform both collection and covert action within the same organization, this linkage blurs what should be a clear distinction between HUMINT collection and covert action. Georgetown University Professor Roy Godson and former Director of Central Intelligence Stansfield Turner articulate the distinction in similar ways. Godson says that intelligence should help formulate (collection, analysis, counterintelligence) and implement policy (covert action).¹³ Turner is direct and unequivocal in his distinction: "Covert action is not intelligence. Covert action is the conduct of foreign policy. Its object is to affect the course of events, not to inform our policy makers about events."¹⁴

Some would argue that this distinction is irrelevant from the perspective of propriety or ethics, in that both activities have unacceptable moral implications for American values and ideals. However, others note that most arguments about ethics are also arguments about policy.¹⁵ Lack of consensus on foreign policy objectives is virtually guaranteed by the American form of

government, according to one analysis.¹⁶ The absence of consensus tends to result in either policy execution being held in abeyance or strongly partisan politicization of those government actions implementing the policy.

Linkage between covert action and HUMINT collection can hinder informed decisionmaking on policy options. If policy-neutral collection becomes hostage to policy-dependent covert action, two dysfunctions are possible. Either the collection requisite to objective analysis and decision does not occur, or collection and analysis may be skewed toward particular policy options. Either dysfunction can allow policy decision and execution to become self-fulfilling prophecy.

Although clandestine HUMINT and covert action are distinct, all of the issue-based intelligence critiques apply to both entities, albeit in differing degree. As will be seen, some conclusions and recommendations by various authorities treat HUMINT and covert action differently, while others prescribe a common solution.

Before proceeding to discussion of the issues themselves, a few words on the author's intent may be useful for understanding this study. Rather than evaluating the validity of various judgements on the issues, this study seeks to identify the mainstream of current and future consensus on HUMINT and covert action. Although the value judgements of military and civilian intelligence managers will be important in charting the course of intelligence, the collective judgements of the public and its

elected and appointed leadership will determine the actual course. For those engaged in the conduct of secret intelligence activities, the ideal would be to conduct all and only those activities the American people would approve if they knew of them and understood what was at stake. Learning how to approach that ideal is what this study is about.

UNDERPINNING THE DEBATE:

CONFLICTING VALUES, APPEALS TO IDEALISM

To search for consensus, or at least dominant trends in thinking, requires that one study the outlines and content of arguments advanced from many quarters. Although some positions taken by various authorities appear to be pragmatically based, with many critics differing in their interpretation of facts, the intelligence debate is fundamentally value-driven.

British sociologist K. G. Robertson points out significant differences between British and American popular attitudes toward secret intelligence, attributing them to higher levels of idealism by Americans. He says the British have worried much less about consensus on values than have Americans. With British nationality traditionally defined as a function of birth, common values are assumed to derive from simply having been born "British." Lacking this tradition, Americans have instead used idealism to bind this nation of immigrants into a political community. Emphasis on consensus for "American" values has led, conversely, to anxiety over "Unamerican" beliefs and activities, both personal and governmental.¹⁷ Conflicting values and appeals to American

idealism are inherent features of the debate, ensuring that compromise is more likely than outright victory to lead to issue resolution and consensus.

ISSUES IN THE INTELLIGENCE DEBATE

The kinds and amount of control over intelligence activities underlie the past and present controversy concerning propriety, accountability, effectiveness and cost-versus-benefit. Some advocates of greater control see the central problem as one of preventing the intelligence organizations from engaging in illegal activity. This position was exemplified by the Democratic Party's 1976 platform, which called for legislated intelligence charters to authorize and prohibit specific activities. For others, the problem is bringing intelligence practices more in line with a given set of values reflecting appreciation for major national security problems."

If control is a means to achieve acceptable standards of propriety, accountability and effectiveness, how are the standards determined? Stafford T. Thomas asserts that the external environment is crucial; if the country's survival is threatened, control of intelligence becomes an irrelevant, if not treasonable, question. If there is not a clear threat to the nation, however, the factors of bureaucratic rivalry and policy debate answer the question of intelligence control."

Effective control tends to yield at least temporary resolution of issues. But as competing groups and individuals have struggled for control in a political system of divided power and

checks and balances, the issues have not been permanently resolved, remaining tied to the political equation and subject to change.

ISSUE: PROPRIETY

Secretary of State Henry L. Stimson is reputed to have declared in 1929, "Gentlemen do not read each other's mail."²⁰ Mr. Stimson's statement was in reference to a cryptographic program, known as "The Black Chamber", from which he withdrew State Department funding.

Controversy over the propriety of intelligence activities such as clandestine HUMINT and covert action usually revolves around concerns about ethics and morality, secrecy, and legitimacy of policy objectives.

The ethics problem involves what has been called a struggle between realists and moralists over the proper balance between protecting the nation's interests and maintaining its virtue.²¹ From the realists' perspective, HUMINT and covert action are good, in that they support national security objectives. However, such capabilities are bad from the moralists' perspective, because they involve intrusive interventionism abroad. The moralists' argument holds that interventionism is incompatible with American beliefs and values; America is supposed to be more honorable than totalitarian regimes.²²

A touchstone in the public debate of the 1970s dealt with whether the nation's official behavior abroad should be constrained by "fair play" ideals, humanitarian values and princi-

ples derived from international law.²³ Those in opposition to longstanding government practice argued that it is immoral and runs counter to American democratic values to coercively induce agents to betray trusts and commit treason in their own countries or to covertly influence elections in foreign countries. E. Drexel Godfrey characterizes clandestine human collection in terms of the moral damage to its participants, describing the process of developing a controlled human source as the very antithesis of ethical interpersonal relationships. According to Godfrey, the clandestine officer's bread and butter is the subversion of his source's integrity.²⁴

Senator Malcolm Wallop dismisses such concerns, suggesting that proportionality between ends and means will preserve the moral quality of intelligence and covert foreign policy. He maintains it is morally permissible to betray a totalitarian government on behalf of a liberal democracy, but not permissible for democracies to subvert other democracies.²⁵

The controversy over secrecy has subsided somewhat since the 1970s, but probably will not disappear completely. Alfred C. Maurer points to a widespread belief, dating from the birth of the country, that the government's right to secrecy is strictly limited by the people's right to know, with the people's right to know founded on a basic distrust of government. Openness is necessary for the people to hold their government in check.²⁶ Unfortunately for consensus, any such appeal to historical authority in the writings of James Madison can lead to a counter-

vailing appeal in favor of secrecy. George Washington wrote in 1777:

The necessity of procuring good intelligence is apparent and need not be further urged - all that remains for me to add is that you keep the whole matter as secret as possible.²⁷

In 1974, Morton Halperin and coauthor Jeremy Stone wrote a critical essay alleging that covert operations and intelligence gathering were being conducted under a cloak of super secrecy that distorts foreign policy decisionmaking and the American constitutional system, and threatens freedom of the press.²⁸ By 1985, Mr. Halperin had balanced his position, accepting both the need for an effective intelligence service, with some activities conducted in secret, and the need to control it so it does not become a threat to liberty.²⁹

A group called People For The American Way articulates a similar view. In attacking what it sees as excessive presidential power, the group allows that some degree of secrecy has a place in government. Writing for the group in 1987, Steven L. Katz said, "The importance of secrecy to the security of our nation is undeniable; however, excessive government secrecy is a serious national problem."³⁰

The most salient argument against excessive secrecy is that raised by Abram Shulsky, who argues that in a democracy, secrecy has the potential to call into question the political legitimacy, as opposed to the actual control of, an intelligence service. If democracy is government not only for the people, but of and by them as well, it is not surprising that institutions that rely so

heavily on secrecy can easily become the objects of popular mistrust.³¹

If secrecy is as potentially harmful to a free democracy as these arguments would indicate, why has the government, as have most governments, insisted on secrecy of its intelligence and selected foreign policy activities?

The arguments for and against secrecy are based on both practical and ethical considerations. Most authorities argue that if a government is to acquire, use and protect intelligence information, that process must be secret by its very nature. K.G. Robertson calls this a pragmatic justification; secrecy is only practiced as a means to achieve intelligence goals.³² Thus, it is necessary to protect one's own secrets from adversaries, while attempting to learn through secret methods the concealed capabilities and intentions of hostile states.

This leads to a second practical argument relating to protection of sensitive intelligence sources and methods. Recognizing that collection against hostile governments with clandestine HUMINT is essentially dangerous, Theodore L. Eliot puts it quite simply: "In some operations, people's lives are at stake, whether we are protecting agents, informants, or others."³³

Former DCI William Colby tries to justify secrecy on ethical grounds. Rather than being incompatible with a free society, secrets are necessary and as fundamental to democracy as the secret ballot and the attorney-client privilege.³⁴ K.G. Robertson supports Colby's argument with his assertion that not only do

citizens have rights as electors and taxpayers (to open government), they also have rights to protection from threats at home or abroad.³⁵ It is in securing both of these rights that the balance between secrecy and openness may undergo further adjustment.

Former CIA Director Robert Gates recognized a need to adjust the Intelligence Community's policy on secrecy. Speaking before the Oklahoma Press Association in February 1992, he jokingly referred to "CIA Openness" as an oxymoron, but went on to outline implementation of steps to reduce secrecy, to make the CIA and the intelligence process more visible and understandable. He said the new approach is based on the belief that it is important for the CIA to be accountable to the American people - both directly and through the Congress.³⁶

Gates did not arrive at this position without some political nudging, however. The Boren/McCurdy reform legislation proposed making the overall intelligence budget dollar amount public for the first time.³⁷ Although the provision was dropped due to an administration veto threat, some members of Congress do not want to defend a secret budget. Senate Budget Committee Chairman Jim Sasser asked, "How are we ever to get a handle on this massive bureaucracy if we cannot discuss publicly even how much money is being spent?"³⁸ Secrecy versus openness, as a component of the propriety debate, is obviously a contemporary political issue on which consensus has not yet emerged, although the trend is toward greater openness and less secrecy.

The issue of legitimacy of clandestine HUMINT and covert action is tied closely to consensus on the perceived external threat and foreign policy objectives to deal with that threat. Harry Howe Ransom describes the public and congressional mood as fluctuating in correlation with relations between the United States and the Soviet Union. At the height of detente, intelligence agencies were less favored in congressional, media and public attitudes. Then came the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the Iranian hostage crisis, the election of Ronald Reagan, and a renewed cold war posture.³⁹

The Reagan Doctrine sought to limit Soviet and proxy expansion of influence in the Third World; the policy was perceived to have enough popular support for Congress to vote in favor of covert funding for the noncommunist resistance in Cambodia, UNITA in Angola and the Mujahidin in Afghanistan. By contrast, Reagan administration support for the Contras in Nicaragua led to the Boland Amendments, and eventually to the Iran-Contra scandal.⁴⁰

ISSUE: ACCOUNTABILITY

If absolute secrecy is the polar opposite of complete openness and public accountability, then some compromise is necessary to balance the competing interests. Shulsky indicates the congressional oversight system may be viewed as such a compromise between the requirement for secrecy and the desire to bring public opinion to bear on the intelligence agencies, to make sure their secret activities neither use means nor seek ends public opinion would not condone. Intelligence committee oversight

serves as a surrogate for the full-scale public debate and democratic decisionmaking process that is incompatible with secrecy.⁴¹

Stansfield Turner has consistently maintained a similar view. He acknowledges two oversight risks (security leaks and congressional committees' impulse to manage rather than just oversee), but argued in 1982 that congressional oversight is beneficial on balance.⁴² In 1986, after disclosure of the Nicaraguan harbor mining, but prior to the Iran-Contra revelations, Turner said the Intelligence Community was threatening civil liberties by operating in secrecy, without the consent of the governed. Alarmed by what he considered the Reagan administration's disdain for oversight, he argued that the conditional consensus inherent in congressional oversight was a worthwhile price to achieve the consent of the governed.⁴³

The legislative oversight system supported by Turner did not evolve in the framework of uniform consensus. Oseth's research indicates the public debate of the 1970s had a major focus on the roles Congress, the courts and the public should play in creating rules and controls. The constitutional system of checks and balances required, according to some arguments, surveillance of the executive's intelligence activities by other branches of government, some arguments going so far as to propose prior review and approval of operations by Congress and the courts.⁴⁴ There remain competing constitutional interpretations of the use and limits of executive, legislative and judicial authority.

Proponents of executive prerogative and proponency for foreign policy compete with advocates of the rule of law. Both sides have struggled through many compromises affecting intelligence since Congress first began to assert its authority on this issue.

In 1974, public allegations of massive misdeeds by the CIA, FBI and other intelligence agencies caused the Senate and House to re-examine the role of Congress in overseeing the activities of the intelligence services. This reexamination resulted in Congress exercising increased control primarily in five separate but associated areas: investigations, oversight, budget authorization and appropriation, legislation, and substantive evaluation of the quality of intelligence.⁴⁵

How well the divided authority and oversight system works depends on one's point of view. Some intelligence professionals complain of micromanagement by legislators and delays and timidity from layers of supervisors. Others, such as former Directors of Central Intelligence (DCI) Colby and Turner, welcome the idea of an executive-legislative partnership for intelligence policy, replacing the ambiguous boundaries of earlier days.⁴⁶

The Senate and House Select Intelligence Committees are the primary vehicle for legislative oversight. Controversy surrounded their formation; ironically, the controversy stemmed more from procedural than substantive issues associated with their respective forebears, the Church and Pike investigating committees.

Senator Church's committee focused mostly on highly sensationalized operations and questionable activities such as assas-

sination plots, domestic operations and the fall of the Allende government in Chile. Congressman Pike's committee concentrated on the management and organization of the Intelligence Community and how well the Community had produced accurate and usable intelligence for decisionmakers.⁴⁷

The Senate committee report was released in April 1976, and in May the Senate voted to create a Select Committee on Intelligence (SSCI) to carry out the new oversight functions recommended in the Church Report.⁴⁸

The House, however, was mired in controversy over the leak of portions of its draft report to CBS newsman Daniel Schorr, later published in the Village Voice.⁴⁹ Stung by the security leaks, the House waited to form a permanent intelligence committee.⁵⁰ After seeing that Senator Inouye's SSCI had formed a positive relationship with the intelligence agencies during its first year of operation,⁵¹ the House voted in July 1977 to establish the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence (HPSCI).⁵²

It seems implicit that if accountability is to function in a balanced manner, permitting legitimate intelligence activities to operate effectively while precluding abuse, bipartisan consensus is required. Harry Howe Ransom finds that the CIA and its operations have been under a protective blanket of nonpartisanship most of the time since 1947.⁵³ However, he also traces an increasing pattern of partisanship and politicization of intelligence, beginning with President Carter's decision to appoint a

new DCI concurrent with the beginning of his administration. He was the first president to treat the DCI position like a cabinet appointment. Conservative members of the Senate viewed Carter's first nominee, Theodore Sorensen, as a partisan political appointment, threatened to block confirmation, and Carter withdrew the nomination in favor of Admiral Stansfield Turner. President Reagan followed Carter's precedent, making the most politically partisan nomination conceivable, his campaign director William Casey.⁴⁴

Bipartisanship is not uniform in the congressional oversight system. Differences in partisan political practice are apparent within the SSCI and HPSCI organization and membership. The Senate, specifically desiring to emphasize bipartisanship, organized the SSCI to consist of balanced party representation, with the majority party having eight members and the minority seven. Committee leadership is balanced, with the Chairman selected by the majority leadership and the Vice Chairman by the minority. The HPSCI membership, on the other hand, consists of nine members for the majority and five for the minority; there is no committee leadership position for the ranking minority member. Gary J. Schmitt sees the downside of these arrangements as SSCI deadlock in the absence of consensus and HPSCI partisan political swings.⁴⁵

Most observers view the legislative oversight system described previously as the dominant, and preferred, means of maintaining accountability of the Intelligence Community. That

system is not the sole means of oversight, however. Executive branch controls and oversight mechanisms also serve in a mostly complementary manner to "police" the intelligence agencies.

In one sense, executive branch controls are in competition with legislative ones. The competition relates to a longstanding difference of opinion between those who favor control by statute and those who favor the flexibility, and autonomy, inherent in the use of executive orders to establish and adjust the rules by which the Intelligence Community operates. This is another manifestation of the executive prerogative versus rule of law dispute. Its existence, however, does not diminish the fact that executive branch oversight mechanisms, when used, have had the same intent as legislative controls: to maintain accountability. As Loch Johnson observed in reviewing controls on covert action, the official approval and oversight procedures have struck an appropriate balance between adequate control and necessary discretionary authority. The problem has been in the unwillingness of some executive branch officials to honor the procedures.⁵⁶

Executive oversight consists of both procedures and responsibilities prescribed by executive order, departmental directives, and in the case of the U.S. military, service regulations.

Its existence and role defined by executive order, the President's Intelligence Oversight Board, part of the Executive Office of the President, monitors intelligence activities, especially with regard to impropriety or illegality. Reports of illegal activities received by the board are forwarded to the

Attorney General. The board also reviews internal agency guidelines and the performance of inspectors general and general counsels within intelligence components.⁵⁷ Although the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board has no authority over the Intelligence Community, the board reviews all intelligence operations, activities and management, and advises the President on recommended intelligence policy changes.⁵⁸

At departmental and agency level, the inspectors general and general counsels assist the cabinet secretaries and agency directors in discharging their oversight responsibilities. Additionally, the Department of Defense retains an Assistant to the Secretary of Defense for Intelligence Oversight, Mr. Werner Michel.⁵⁹

The author first met Mr. Michel in 1983, when his staff performed an intelligence oversight inspection of the author's organization. Since then, Mr. Michel's schedule has permitted three additional oversight compliance inspections in the author's units of assignment. These inspections assessed the adequacy of internal oversight procedures employed by command and staff elements, checked on the frequency and recency of required training on law and policy directives (including sampled level of knowledgeability in rank-and-file service members), and included search of unit areas and files for evidence of prohibited activities, such as unauthorized collection or retention of information on U.S. persons. However cordial and professional the inspection

team, the inspections were both rigorous and intrusive, by intent.

These various executive branch oversight bodies and functions do not obviate legislative oversight; they in fact strengthen the total oversight process.

Before leaving the issue of accountability, mild skepticism prompted the author to wonder about public interest in intelligence issues, based on a recent example. After months of controversy over his nomination in 1991, during which the Senate asked him 861 questions about his past, including his memory of Iran-Contra, Robert Gates was confirmed as the DCI.⁶⁰ Despite the controversy in the Senate, The Gallup Poll, Public Opinion 1991, found that Gates' nomination did not stir much interest among the public. Forty-five percent of those polled expressed no opinion on Gates' confirmation, including fifteen percent who said they had never heard of Bush's nominee, who was the CIA's deputy director during the Iran-Contra arms deals.⁶¹ While not compelling as an overall indicator of public awareness and interest, Gallup's finding should serve to remind one that congressional controversy or substantial media coverage of an issue does not necessarily indicate strong public opinion on that issue.

ISSUE: EFFECTIVENESS

Controversy over how well the Intelligence Community performs its mission has been an episodic phenomenon. After each foreign policy reverse or flawed military operation, allegations of intelligence failure recur.

Although most of the criticism of the Intelligence Community's performance has been directed at analytic failures to forecast significant events, the debate over performance has also included collection deficiencies and covert action failures. Arguments about collection have tended to compare the virtues of technical collection against those of HUMINT, with President Carter's and DCI Turner's overwhelming preference for technical collection a commonly identified shortcoming. From the author's perspective, the which-is-better argument would better serve if focused on optimizing the potential synergy among disciplines, both for cross-cuing collection and for corroboration of information during analysis.

While the intelligence debate of the 1970s had been primarily a propriety and civil liberties versus national security argument, a so-called "performance lobby" of conservative Republicans tried to change the terms of the debate in 1980. Senators Wallop and Laxalt argued that the more relevant intelligence issues were quality and competence, not intrusion into civil liberties. In their view, reforms should be designed to strengthen the intelligence agencies' capacity to do their jobs. They introduced legislation in 1980 to that effect, and the Republican campaign platform pledged to revitalize intelligence.⁴²

The current debate over intelligence reform focuses as heavily on performance issues as in 1980, but adds the post-Cold War dimensions of declining resources and new and different

intelligence requirements. Loch K. Johnson describes Senator Boren's reform philosophy as advocating more intelligence gathering by the secret agencies, while at the same time taking an ax to their budgets. The Boren prescription is "more for less."⁶³

In the current effectiveness debate, most reformers identify the need for increased reliance on HUMINT. Senators Sam Nunn and David Boren, Congressman Dave McCurdy, HPSCI staffer Paula Scalingi and even reputed HUMINT opponent Stansfield Turner argue for revitalized HUMINT. Not fully converted though, Turner somewhat defensively advances the argument that technical intelligence, despite opinion to the contrary, is useful for discerning intentions.⁶⁴

Although mostly a footnote in the consideration of HUMINT, criticism of its effectiveness as practiced questions whether it can meet current and future collection requirements. Codevilla and Godson both identify the predominant use of official (U.S. Government) cover by case officers as a major limiting factor in HUMINT's ability to spot, recruit and exploit enough sources with adequate placement and access in "closed societies."⁶⁵ However, given the political and operational risks of operating under non-official cover, i.e., without diplomatic immunity, there is little likelihood in the author's estimation of either the HUMINT community substantially changing its modus operandi or its overseers demanding such change.

ISSUE: COST-VERSUS-BENEFIT

While defense and intelligence budgets are declining, no one knows how much they will ultimately decline and how quickly.

Congress reduced the Fiscal Year (FY) 1992 Intelligence Authorization by more than \$600 million from the Bush administration request.⁶⁶ For FY 1993, House and Senate conferees trimmed slightly over \$1 billion, almost six percent of the National Foreign Intelligence Program.⁶⁷ The Senate earlier voted down an amendment by Senator Bumpers of Arkansas to reduce intelligence spending (in the Defense Appropriations bill) by an additional \$1 billion. Bumpers had argued, "The Soviet Union does not exist. The rationale for this massive budget does not exist."⁶⁸

In addition to the budget cuts already enacted, Congress has put the Defense Department on notice to consolidate intelligence activities and eliminate redundancies.⁶⁹ In Senator Nunn's July 1992 speech in the Senate on service roles and missions, he addressed intelligence in five separate passages, emphasizing the need to eliminate duplication of effort.⁷⁰ With Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Colin Powell's rejection of the congressional call to overhaul service roles and missions,⁷¹ congressional temptation to redesign the military intelligence structure by the authorization and appropriations process may resurface in the 103d Congress.

Since the mid-1960s, intelligence budget allocations for HUMINT have been consistently small in proportion to other categories of spending.⁷² Funding for covert action declined from an

estimated sixty percent of the CIA budget in 1967 to approximately five percent in 1977, then expanded to around twenty percent by 1986.⁷³ Covert action was estimated to comprise less than one percent of the total intelligence budget in 1992.⁷⁴ From the 1960s to present, funding for technical systems has steadily increased to absorb the bulk of the intelligence budget.⁷⁵

While the budget trends cited by some authorities suggest that technical systems have grown at the expense of HUMINT and covert action, other factors account for the evolution. The high point in covert action funding coincided with the peak of U.S. involvement in the Vietnam Conflict, with most covert action funding probably allocated to that conflict. Technical collection expanded greatly due to technological advances and growth of intelligence requirements appropriate for technical collection.

The key components of the cost-benefit issue for HUMINT and covert action are dependent less on absolute dollar cost than on perceived benefit versus the political costs associated with risk of compromise. The relatively long lead times required for development of mature HUMINT and covert action tend to work against the two activities in risk-versus-gain assessments and budget deliberations. The imbalance between primarily long term benefit and short term costs in both dollars and risk precludes HUMINT and covert action from being completely immune to the effects of budget decrement, despite their relatively low financial costs.

An additional factor associated with budget decrement may adversely affect HUMINT and covert action. Because the two activities tend to be labor-intensive and absorb significant management attention, the Intelligence Community personnel draw-downs currently underway could have a noticeable, though not drastic, effect on the volume and scope of operational activity for the next several years. Although current cuts may involve deletions of vacant personnel billets without appreciably altering "on-hand" strength, later and deeper cuts are likely to be felt in the form of retirements and reductions in force.

THE ISSUES COMBINED:

IMPLICATIONS FOR HUMINT AND COVERT ACTION

When the component issues in the intelligence debate are considered together, various authorities reach mixed conclusions on clandestine HUMINT and covert action. Most published intelligence critiques have tended to follow the more controversial disclosures of Intelligence Community activities. During the mid-1970s, an unprecedented number of books and articles in periodicals were published in the aftermath of events already discussed. The mid-1980s saw a lesser but still intense surge in published works after disclosures of activist covert action programs in the Mideast and Latin America, especially Iran-Contra. The latest increase in published research and opinion has been more proactive than the first two surges, focusing more on intelligence requirements and resources in the 1990s.

The bottom-line assessments by prominent authorities -- from prestigious universities, "think tank" institutions, and executive and legislative branches of government -- constitute essentially three sets of prescriptions for change. While not all-inclusive, they represent the major implications for clandestine HUMINT and covert action.

One school of thought emphasizes propriety and effectiveness. Citing both moral damage to the participants and limited effectiveness of the results, Drexel Godfrey argued in 1978 that political operations (covert action) and clandestine HUMINT should be eliminated. Godfrey did, however, allow for a small, residual capability to emplace short-range technical collection devices and exploit espionage volunteers such as defectors or "walk-in" sources.⁷⁶

A second prescription has more adherents; it opposes covert action but favors continuation of clandestine HUMINT. Proponents' judgements and conclusions also consider propriety but differ from Godfrey's in effectiveness versus need.

Based on his opinion of proper conduct of foreign policy and the qualities of our democratic society, Herbert Scoville proposed in 1976 that the country cease all covert action operations. However, he saw clandestine agent operations as having limited but critical potential as a source of intelligence information.⁷⁷

Harry Rositzke, writing in 1975, and Allan E. Goodman, writing in 1987, share a slightly different view of covert action

but similarly endorse HUMINT. Convinced that the self-defeating amalgam of covert action and secret intelligence in one organization was key to the CIA's ineffectiveness, Rositzke called for the elimination of psychological warfare operations (propaganda) and transfer of paramilitary covert action to the Department of Defense. He further urged the creation of a small espionage service separate from the CIA, reporting directly to the DCI.⁷⁸ Relying on Stansfield Turner's assertion that the majority of espionage professionals believed covert action had detracted from the CIA's primary role of collection and analysis, Goodman said covert action should be limited to paramilitary operations, primarily in wartime situations, with responsibility returned to the Defense Department.⁷⁹

Coauthoring Strategic Intelligence for American National Security in 1989, Goodman took a marginally different tack on the two activities. Emphasizing accountability and oversight of covert action as a critical issue, he took no position on the question of whether covert action is a proper policy option for the U.S.⁸⁰ While emphasizing the importance of technical collection, Goodman and his coauthor Berkowitz acknowledged that for some collection requirements, a clandestine human source might be the best source of information.⁸¹

A third prescription for change appears to represent a mainstream consensus in current academic and congressional thought. Most authorities in this group have balanced their assessments on the issues of propriety, accountability, effectiveness and cost-

versus-benefit to arrive at conclusions which do not substantially alter the status quo for HUMINT and covert action.

Although not explicitly advocating its employment, most adherents of this school of thought tend to accept covert action as a necessary-but-difficult policy option, and recommend clarification and improvement of congressional and executive oversight to govern its prudent, and therefore infrequent, application by the CIA. Gregory Treverton, Stansfield Turner and Loch Johnson all share this mainstream view.⁸² Additionally, Turner and Johnson favor strengthening centralized authority over the Intelligence Community for collection tasking and budget control.⁸³

These representative prescriptions for change derive from evolution of the intelligence debate from the 1970s to the 1990s. That debate has tended to be reactive to Intelligence Community activities. In turn, those activities have reflected the political and security environment in which the agencies have functioned. Following is an outline of major events and developments of the last quarter-century that formed the context in which the issues were debated.

MAJOR EVENTS AND DEVELOPMENTS, 1976-1992

The proceedings of the Church and Pike Committees, occurring in the aftermath of Vietnam and Watergate, led to changes which fundamentally altered the environment in which intelligence would function. The period between 1976 and 1992, comprising the presidential campaign and election of Jimmy Carter, the Reagan and Bush administrations, and the campaign and election of Bill

Clinton, reflects an ebb and flow of consensus on intelligence. This section discusses the decline of HUMINT and covert action during the Carter administration, its partial resurgence under the Reagan Doctrine, and a sea-change in perceptions of national security and intelligence requirements corresponding with the end of the Cold War.

THE CARTER YEARS

Mark Lowenthal says the Carter administration took office with an attitude toward U.S. intelligence ranging from skeptical to hostile. During the election campaign Carter had referred to the media and congressional revelations on intelligence on occasion, sometimes grouping them with other scandals, and promised to be more careful in his use of covert action.⁴ Ransom asserts that Carter campaigned on an explicit "clean up the intelligence system" platform.⁵

Hoping to avoid controversy in his second attempt at DCI nomination, President Carter's choice of U.S. Naval Academy classmate Stansfield Turner was successful, but not much past obtaining Senate confirmation. Controversy over Turner began when he announced personnel reductions in the CIA's Directorate of Operations, usually referred to by the short title of its senior official, the Deputy Director for Operations (DDO). Turner contended that he hoped to eliminate "dead wood" in the DDO, opening up higher ranks to more junior officers.⁶

The timing of Turner's tenure partially supports his contention. Comparable to the decline in covert action expenditures by

the CIA after the Vietnam Conflict, it is probable the CIA's personnel ranks contained more paramilitary specialists than would be required during the late 1970s and 1980s.

Despite the legitimate need to redress personnel imbalances, Turner's methods provoked resentment. In what became known as the Halloween Massacre of October 31, 1977, extraordinarily brusque termination notices were given to approximately two hundred employees. Turner also removed several Chiefs of Station overseas and the DDO himself. These dismissals seriously affected morale at the CIA, even among those officers for whom room at the top was being created, according to Lowenthal. News reports in February 1979 that two hundred middle and senior managers were seeking early retirement were seen by many as reflecting the low state of morale in the CIA.⁸⁷ By 1980, over three-fourths of the CIA's roughly four hundred officers at rank GS-16 through GS-18 had not held that rank four years before.⁸⁸

Turner's critics also charged that he was downgrading human intelligence in favor of technical collection systems.⁸⁹ Ernest Volkman and Blaine Baggett describe Turner as being certain that the future of intelligence depended primarily on technology. He had retired CIA officers on the grounds that increasingly expensive intelligence systems made such acts mandatory. The CIA could either have large staffs of human spies or it could have costly technical systems, but not both.⁹⁰

President Carter's preferences accorded with those of his DCI, according to most writers. Compared with the frailties of human spies, satellites were reliable and safe."

The Carter administration was not without internal controversy over HUMINT, or lack thereof, however. National Security Advisor Brzezinski is alleged to have snapped at Turner in a meeting, "You haven't got a single asset in the Soviet Union." Volkman says Brzezinski should have added, "and hardly anyplace else, either."²

The author's experience in a succession of military intelligence assignments corresponds with the published literature on HUMINT's decline during the 1970s. Initially trained in counter-intelligence in 1972 and assigned to a HUMINT organization, the author observed a significant decline in the number of military HUMINT operations over the next three years. By 1976, with military HUMINT to be absorbed by nonmilitary entities, Army professional development counsellors were advocating tactical, strategic or signals intelligence specialization as paths for advancement. Codevilla asserts the CIA used its primacy in the field of HUMINT to virtually deprive the military of any serious agent-handling capacity, and he cites the decline in operations in the mid-1970s.³ Subsequent exposure of the author to all-source collection capabilities in the 1980s revealed how difficult it would be for HUMINT, especially militarily-relevant HUMINT, to be resuscitated.

THE TURN-AROUND

After three years in the White House and much criticism over his handling of foreign policy and intelligence, President Carter apparently experienced at least a partial change of heart. In his January 1980 State of the Union address, he called for removal of unwarranted restraints on America's ability to collect intelligence.⁹⁴

Despite President Carter's State of the Union comments, and intelligence and defense budget increases in 1980, his efforts were seen by many as too little, too late.⁹⁵ The initiative had passed to the Republicans. A Republican National Committee Advisory Council report released during the campaign blamed the Democrat-controlled Congress and the Carter administration for weakening the intelligence system, resulting in, among other consequences, severe loss of morale, crippling of the intelligence community's effectiveness, too much reliance on mechanized, technical processes, and insufficient attention to human intelligence collection and analysis.⁹⁶ Turner, defending his record through frequent contributions to the media since then, asserts the problem was not morale but unwillingness to take risks, caused by the clamor, criticism and hype associated with the 1975 congressional investigations.⁹⁷

THE REAGAN YEARS

President Reagan appeared to deliver on his 1980 campaign pledge to restore the intelligence community, giving it greater prominence and freedom.⁹⁸ His intelligence advisors spent most

of 1981 drafting Executive Order 12333, which eased restrictions on intelligence imposed by Presidents Ford and Carter. In issuing the new executive order in December 1981, the President said the new rules were consistent with his campaign promise to revitalize the nation's intelligence system."

The Reagan Doctrine sought to roll back the advance of "the evil empire." DCI Casey's penchant for covert action, supported with some significant reservations by Congress, received most of the administration's and congressional attention. It appears that most, if not all, of the promised revitalization occurred in covert action and not HUMINT collection, reflecting willingness to take risks in covert action. During the first term of the Reagan administration, covert operations increased fivefold over the last year of the Carter administration.¹⁰⁰

In HUMINT, however, cases of being caught short continued into the Reagan years, most visibly in support of military contingency operations. In October 1983, Operation URGENT FURY in Grenada was said to suffer from lack of HUMINT, as had been the case for the Iranian hostage rescue attempt in 1980.¹⁰¹ While a low intelligence priority for Grenada for all collection and analysis is probably the main cause of that perceived intelligence failure, an enduring theme in intelligence literature holds that lack of HUMINT was the primary intelligence deficiency in both the Iran and Grenada operations.

THE BUSH YEARS

There were no significant disclosures involving covert action during the Bush administration. Congressional concern on the subject carried over from previous attempts to prevent a recurrence of Iran-Contra, with disputes over further tightening of oversight.

The 100th Congress had unsuccessfully attempted to mandate creation of an Inspector General within the CIA. The 101st Congress created the position in 1989, despite Bush administration opposition.¹⁰²

Other disputes between the administration and Congress over covert operations centered on notification requirements, resulting in the first-ever presidential (pocket) veto of an intelligence authorization bill. The 102nd Congress wanted to impose a presidential requirement to notify the intelligence committees within forty-eight hours of signing a finding for covert action. The administration resisted, holding to a 1986 Justice Department opinion specifying notification in a "timely fashion."¹⁰³

The FY 91 Intelligence Authorization Bill contained notification timeline requirements and an expanded definition of covert action, both of which President Bush objected to in announcing his refusal to sign the bill into law.¹⁰⁴

Complaints of inadequate HUMINT resurfaced during the Bush administration, again following allegations of intelligence shortfalls in military operations. After Operation JUST CAUSE, General Maxwell Thurmond, U.S. Commander-in-Chief Southern Command, complained, "We have neglected HUMINT. We love to count

tanks, missiles, silo holes, but we have not spent enough time on the minds of men."¹⁰⁵ In the aftermath of Operation DESERT STORM, the SSCI called for greater emphasis on HUMINT and the creation of a military flag-rank Assistant DDO in the CIA, selected by the Secretary of Defense. The ADDO position was intended to improve Defense Department-DDO liaison, and ensure military requirements for HUMINT were represented earlier and more forcefully in the operational planning cycle. The CIA had its ADDO by early 1992.¹⁰⁶

The continuing identification of endemic HUMINT weaknesses is troublesome. Whether the problem results from less risk-taking for HUMINT than for covert action, inherent weaknesses in HUMINT cover and case officer methodology, or unrealistic expectations of HUMINT's ability to quickly penetrate security-conscious targets remains an open question in the author's mind. The problem of inadequate HUMINT capability may result from a combination of these and other factors, all underpinned by the basic fact that espionage has always been an extraordinarily difficult and dangerous undertaking, the basic properties of which are unlikely to change.

THE OUTLOOK FOR FUTURE CONSENSUS

There is room for considerable uncertainty regarding the future direction of intelligence consensus. The Clinton administration, with new cabinet secretaries, DCI and departmental presidential appointees, will be interacting with intelligence committees in the 103d Congress that have undergone significant

membership turnovers, with uncertain dynamics in the new alignments. The SSCI has a different Chairman, Vice Chairman and five new committee members.¹⁰⁷ The HPSCI has a different chairman and eight new members.¹⁰⁸ So many new participants in an unfinished intelligence reform debate may lead to a basic reexamination of the old issues and creation of new ones. Fortunately, however, relative continuity in professional intelligence officials and the professional staff of the intelligence committees should mitigate against excessive swings in debate and consensus.

A prime area of uncertainty is how much consensus will emerge and in what direction regarding use of HUMINT and covert action to satisfy non-traditional requirements in economic and environmental intelligence, and whether to expand roles in counternarcotics, weapons proliferation and coalition military operational support. Academic, political and professional intelligence opinions are mixed on the question, with more dialogue certain to follow.

CONCLUSION

Consensus on the role and activities of secret intelligence is a variable commodity. The interplay among different issues, shaped by differing perceptions of the external security environment and internal needs of society, has altered the functions of clandestine HUMINT and covert action several times over the years. As two activities of the Intelligence Community that are especially sensitive to consensus on publicly-held values of propriety, accountability and effectiveness, HUMINT and covert

action have been both popular and unpopular within different bodies of opinion. Sometimes called the business of spies and dirty tricks, they have been subject to both curtailment and uncontrolled acceleration as the public mood has shifted over time.

The shifting consensus on HUMINT and covert action has been disturbing to many practitioners in the Intelligence Community. Some conclude that controversy over their activities limits the effectiveness of intelligence. It is easy for an intelligence practitioner to assume he holds the moral high ground by doing what is good for acquisition of intelligence and achievement of policy objectives. Therefore, any obstacles to operational progress are, per se, wrong and must be overcome.

What the practitioner may fail to see is his own confusion over ends and means. Secret intelligence does not exist for its own sake, and its advancement cannot become an end in itself. Just as secrecy may be a means to the end of effective intelligence, effective intelligence can only be a means to the end of a system of government which secures those objectives sought by its citizens. Therefore, the question cannot be what is good for intelligence; the question must be, what do the people want?

The persistence of an American debate on secret intelligence, although evolving in terms of the relative importance of its constituent issues, should serve to alert the Intelligence Community and its overseers to pay attention to the extent and thrust of consensus for various intelligence activities. Political

accountability through elections tends to make this point obvious to the overseers, but practitioners buried in the intelligence agencies are often insulated enough to practice their own form of denial. As with most forms of denial, however, there is inevitable frustration and anxiety when events do not go as desired.

Despite the imperfect solutions of a politically-partisan system and the question of a clear mandate from the public, fragile consensus worked out between the Intelligence Community and the public's representatives is essential. Such consensus is the only available semblance of a contract between the people and their public servants in the intelligence agencies. The contract is essential if one accepts the concept that the government and its intelligence agencies function with the consent of the governed.

That contractual consensus has evolved over time, primarily sensitive to issues of excess and abuse when shattered in the 1970s. More than just outrage by moral absolutists over unethical activities, the 1970s search for a new consensus focused on the balance between moralism and realism, secrecy and openness, legitimacy and illegitimacy of contested foreign policy objectives, and the very difficult balance between accountability through external oversight and discretionary authority within the Intelligence Community. Secrecy was an especially troublesome component of the debate. On a pragmatic basis, secrecy is an essential element of effective clandestine intelligence and

plausibly-deniable covert action. On both a pragmatic and a philosophical basis, however, secrecy impedes accountability, by shielding intelligence from review by the governed of both its ethical conduct and its effectiveness.

With implicit public trust largely dissipated, indirect accountability was established in the various branches of government beginning in the mid-1970s. An idealistic, human rights-oriented administration and oversight-minded Congress tried to control the Intelligence Community. With some damage to the effectiveness of intelligence, the overseers struck a new balance in the dilemmas posed by the issues.

After a few years, with a growing public perception that their civil liberties were essentially secure but the country's future clouded by threats from the Soviet Union and emerging forces in the Third World, the Reagan administration took office in 1981 with the express intent to resuscitate America's international prestige and self-image. The Intelligence Community found itself on the front lines of this fight. A new balance of partial consensus yielded wider operational latitude for the intelligence agencies.

The new issue in the 1980s was different, however. Effectiveness of the intelligence agencies was the prime issue, but propriety and accountability were still important. Amid some conflict over these latter two issues, the Intelligence Community labored to help win the heightened Cold War. HUMINT and covert action were in vogue, at least in some sectors of government.

Whether by success or forfeiture, the U.S. had won the Cold War by the end of the decade. The cost, however, had been high in the public's mind, with staggering budget deficits and a ballooning national debt. With victory came a resurgence of suppressed public demand for the attention and resources of the government to address domestic needs. Yet another relationship among the intelligence issues became apparent. Concerns over cost-versus-benefit, combined with questioned effectiveness of intelligence practices and organizations, yielded a new yardstick: cost-effectiveness. Under this new criterion, the balance between secrecy and openness and between public accountability through oversight and internal discretionary authority must be adjusted again to allow some measure of public assessment of the Intelligence Community's cost-effectiveness. Against this yardstick, the cost of various intelligence activities and organizations in a declining resource base must be measured against their effectiveness in meeting uncertain, ambiguous and competing future requirements.

In essence, the Intelligence Community's implied contract is again being negotiated by arbiters in the executive and legislative branches of government. What the new contract will specify is not yet totally clear, but there are several emerging implications for the future of HUMINT and covert action in the remainder of the decade.

In general, the uncertainty and instability of the new world disorder are likely to provide the major impetus for continued

investment by the government in HUMINT and covert action capabilities, albeit on the basis of cost-consciousness and consideration of political embarrassment. The need for flexibility, stressed by then-DCI Gates in 1992 testimony against the Boren/McCurdy reform legislation,¹⁰⁹ will hopefully be accepted by the new administration and Congress as the best defense of U.S. interests in a world in turbulent transition.

Although an unstable world order may provide impetus for continued intelligence investment, instability and policy uncertainty can also limit the return on that investment. Absence of clearly focused, stable policy themes and requirements will frustrate the effective development and specific targetting of intelligence resources. For long lead-time activities like HUMINT, reactive management generally sacrifices much of its potential ability to satisfy intelligence requirements.

There appears to be strong bipartisan support for increased reliance on HUMINT in the post-Cold War environment, but neither speech-making on the floor of the House and Senate nor publication of articles in the media will be sufficient to achieve this goal. Innovative methods of basing and covering HUMINT personnel in the U.S. and overseas, and more balanced risk-versus-gain assessments, with executive managers and legislative overseers buying into political risk up front, will be required for even incremental gains in HUMINT effectiveness.

Budget reductions figure prominently in congressional deliberations on defense and intelligence, and will be central to

Clinton administration thinking as well. It is probably wishful thinking to hope that Loch Johnson's logic would appeal to Congress and the new administration:

Few dispute the inevitability of intelligence budget reductions in this time of fiscal stress, but most remain mindful that the United States needs to recruit new HUMINT assets in turbulent regions of the world that have been ignored in the past....Fortunately, because people cost less than high-tech machines, it will be possible to acquire new personnel at the same time as the budget is cut - by as much as one-third.¹¹⁰

Despite uncertainties on resource levels and political will for necessary risk-taking, some trends are emerging. HUMINT, and to a lesser degree covert action, will be conducted in an environment of greater openness, against more diverse tasking requirements, in support of both traditional and non-traditional consumers. Although some categories of intelligence information and operations may not be sustainable in secret form for as long as in the past, specific sources and methods of operation will still require protection. Increasingly diverse and fast-breaking requirements will compete for satisfaction by reduced capabilities, with risk acceptance the only resolution for unmet requirements. In serving both old and new consumers, the Intelligence Community must exercise due caution to avoid conflict of interest through inadvertant politicization.

Despite some probable skirmishing over executive prerogative and congressional authority, the administration and Congress are likely to seek further clarification of their respective roles and authorities. Outright renunciation of covert action as an

instrument of national security policy is unlikely, but its use will be highly selective, limited to applications in which the covert action can be executed in clear consonance with overt policy objectives. Thorough prior consultations among the administration and intelligence and armed services committees should be the norm.

Although the defense structure will undergo substantial reorganization, several factors may converge to delay radical overhaul of the Intelligence Community, other than selective shrinkage through budget decrement. Subject matter experts offer disparate recommendations for intelligence reform. Former DCI Gates implemented several administrative changes in Intelligence Community organization and procedures in 1992, some of which were later incorporated into the FY 1993 Intelligence Authorization Act. It may require some time for the new National Security Council, DCI and intelligence committees to sort out their priorities. Foreign policy crisis management requirements, together with public expectations for emphasis on domestic priorities, may diffuse the leadership's attention, making intelligence reform more tentative and piecemeal than deliberate.

On the other hand, the 1992 reform/reorganization legislation faced opposition from the previous administration, with the ever-present threat of a Bush veto. With a one-party government in power, Congress and the administration may develop sufficient consensus to begin serious overhaul of the Intelligence Community.

HUMINT and covert action will not be prime targets in this

effort; dollars will be. Nonetheless, the overall turbulence in intelligence organizations will surely affect progress of the two activities.

Regardless of the turbulence of reorganization, the challenges facing the Intelligence Community are immensely complex. The issue of covert action may become less significant in the coming years; however, HUMINT will remain an important intelligence asset. The U.S. will need every collection resource it has the money, will and skills to employ if it is to acquire the foreknowledge to enter the next century a strong and prosperous country in a favorable world order.

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